

## **Halesowen Area Committee – 10<sup>th</sup> November 2010**

### **Report of the Director of the Urban Environment**

#### **Halesowen Town Centre Development**

##### **Purpose of the Report**

1. To update the Committee on progress with regard to physical developments taking place in Halesowen Town Centre.

##### **Background**

2. At the 14<sup>th</sup> March 2007 Halesowen Area Committee, Members requested that progress reports be presented to future Committees with an update on progress with regard to the development of the Cornbow shopping centre, bus station and town centre management issues.

##### **Regeneration and Planning Issues**

3. Work is continuing on the Action Plan for environmental improvements for the Town Centre with particular focus on the first and pilot year for 'Halesowen in Bloom' and on seeking financial and voluntary support from partners and the community.
4. Based on the work carried out to date in the first and Pilot year of the In Bloom initiative which showed an appetite from business and the community to support an In Bloom initiative, an In Bloom Steering Group has been launched which seeks to migrate the In Bloom proposals from a local authority sponsored project to one which is owned and steered by partners in and around the town centre. This Steering Group has met on 2 occasions since September and has been working on identifying actual locations, costs and feasibility of future floral displays in the town centre and on proposals on how an effective In Bloom submission will be made. The Steering Group is also overseeing the preparation of an active marketing campaign that is intended to secure additional sponsorship in time to provide a much greater level of floral displays in the town for the 2010/11 season. As a result of this, and by active engagement of town centre businesses, sponsorship receipts have continued to increase.

## **Installation of welcome/information for shoppers & visitors**

5. The artwork for the welcome sign to in the Bus Station entrance to the Cornbow Centre has been handed over to Centro for installation in the information panel already in place
6. The information panel to be installed at the top of the High Street has been delivered and at the time of preparing the report was due to be installed by the end of October.

## **Husky Dog Island**

7. The planting works, which are intended to bring colour and interest to this gateway site, have now been completed, with the exception of the specimen tree due to be planted on the island and which is currently being sourced with a view to being planted before Christmas 2010

## **Empty Shops Initiative**

8. Members will be aware from the report to the March meeting of this Committee of the £52,000 grant to the Council from the Department for Communities and Local Government to carry out improvements to empty shop fronts in the town.
9. At present the Council's approach to spending this money is to install vinyl images to windows of vacant properties to reduce the impact of vacancies, as this is a low cost option that has been successful elsewhere. Significant efforts have been made to seek the agreement of the owners/occupiers of suitable premises, whose agreement is needed prior to any work taking place. Five suitable premises have been identified and surveyed by the company identified to carry out the work and negotiations are underway with the owners/occupiers over agreement to install the vinyls

## **Town Centre Management Issues**

10. The Halesowen and Rowley Regis and the Hasbury and Cradley Rotary Clubs working with the Town Centre Management service relaunched the Halesowen Victorian Street Fayre on the 6<sup>th</sup> October
11. There were thirty-five Rotary stalls with stall holders dressed in Victorian era costume. Hospital radio DJ Peter James compered the day with live acts such as the Jazz Ramblers and Brum and Dudley performing in the square and High Street throughout the day. There were awards and prizes given for the best dressed shop and best dressed dressed volunteer. Both the Mayor Councillor Peter Millar and James Morris MP visited the event and toured the various stalls. The event was a major success for Halesowen.
12. The Christmas lights are due to be switched on Saturday November 20th 2010 .
13. The Christmas Tree kindly sponsored by Sandvik Coromat Uk will be installed and the lights switched on the 10th December 2010

## **Finance**

14. A number of the issues raised within this report have a direct financial implication on the Council. However, all costs detailed which fall on the Council will be funded by existing capital or revenue budgets held within Economic Regeneration Division.

## **Law**

15. Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000 enables the Council to do anything which it considers likely to achieve the promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental wellbeing of any part of the Borough.

16. The Council is empowered to improve Highways under section 62 of the Highways Act 1980. Traffic Regulation orders are made under powers contained in section 1 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. The traffic calming Act 1992 amends the Highways Act 1980 to allow works to be carried out to promote safety and to preserve or improve the environment. Section 111 of the local Government Act 1972 empowers the Council to do anything calculated to facilitate or is conducive or incidental to the discharge of any of its functions.

## **Equality Impact**

17. A principal role of the Directorate of the Urban Environment is to encourage inclusivity amongst all sectors of the community, including the needs of children and young people. All projects have been conducted in full accordance with the Council's equality and diversity policies and should in no way have any prejudicial impact on different racial groups, disabled people, both genders and /or other relevant groups

## **Recommendation**

18. That the Committee notes the progress of development in Halesowen Town Centre.



.....  
**John B Millar**  
**Director of the Urban Environment**

### **Contact Officers:**

Rupert Dugdale  
Head of Economic Regeneration Delivery  
01384 815538  
[rupert.dugdale@dudley.gov.uk](mailto:rupert.dugdale@dudley.gov.uk)